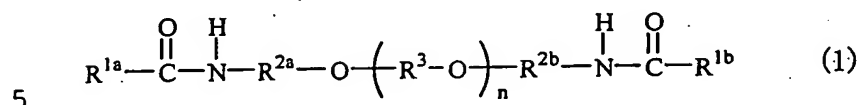


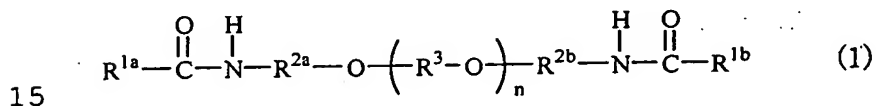
## Claims

1. A composition for external application, which comprises a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



(wherein,  $R^{1a}$  and  $R^{1b}$  are the same or different and each represents a  $C_{1-23}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^{2a}$  and  $R^{2b}$  are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{1-6}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^3$ s are the same or different and each  
10 represents a divalent  $C_{2-6}$  hydrocarbon group and  $n$  stands for 1 to 100).

2. A composition for external application, which comprises a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):

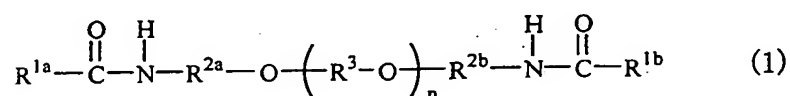


(wherein,  $R^{1a}$  and  $R^{1b}$  are the same or different and each represents a  $C_{1-23}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^{2a}$  and  $R^{2b}$  are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{1-6}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^3$ s are the same or different and each  
20 represents a divalent  $C_{2-6}$  hydrocarbon group and  $n$  stands for 1 to 100) and an intercellular lipid component of the horny layer.

3. A composition for external application according to claim 2, wherein the intercellular lipid component of the horny layer is at least one selected from ceramides, pseudoceramids, sphingoglycolipids, sphingophospholipids, sphingosines and derivatives thereof, sphinganine and derivatives thereof, higher fatty acids, and cholesterol and derivatives thereof.

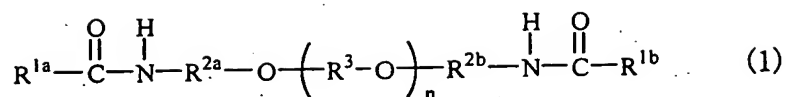
4. A composition for external application according to any one of claims 1 to 3, which is a cosmetic composition.

5. A humectant, which comprises, as an effective ingredient, a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



(wherein,  $R^{1a}$  and  $R^{1b}$  are the same or different and each represents a  $C_{1-23}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^{2a}$  and  $R^{2b}$  are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{1-6}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^3$ s are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{2-6}$  hydrocarbon group and  $n$  stands for 1 to 100).

6. A skin barrier function reinforcing agent, which comprises, as an effective ingredient, a diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1):



(wherein,  $R^{1a}$  and  $R^{1b}$  are the same or different and each represents a  $C_{1-23}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^{2a}$  and  $R^{2b}$  are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{1-6}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^3$ s are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{2-6}$  hydrocarbon group and  $n$  stands for 1 to 100).

7. A method for reinforcing the water retaining ability of the horny layer, which comprises applying, to the skin, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

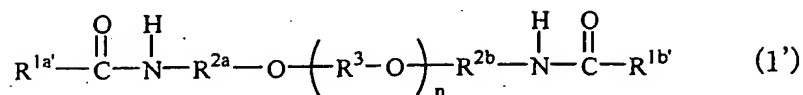
8. A method for reinforcing skin barrier functions, which comprises applying, to the skin, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

9. A method for remedying excessive hair dryness or improving touch feel of the hair, which comprises applying, to the hair, an effective amount of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1.

10. Use of a diamide derivative as claimed in claim 1 for the preparation of a composition for external application.

11. Use according to claim 10, wherein the composition for external application serves as cosmetics.

12. A diamide derivative represented by the following formula (1'):



(wherein,  $R^{1a'}$  and  $R^{1b'}$  are the same or different and each represents a branched  $C_{4-23}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^{2a}$  and  $R^{2b}$  are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{1-6}$  hydrocarbon group,  $R^3$ s are the same or different and each represents a divalent  $C_{2-6}$  hydrocarbon group and  $n$  stands for 1 to 100).

13. A diamide derivative according to Claim 12, wherein  $R^{1a'}$  and  $R^{1b'}$  each represents a branched  $C_{5-17}$  alkyl group,  $R^{2a}$  and  $R^{2b}$  each represents a  $C_{2-6}$  alkylene group,  $R^3$  represents a  $C_{2-6}$  alkylene group and  $n$  stands for 1 to 10.

14. A diamide derivative according to claim 12, which is represented by the following formula (C):

